DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 397 368 CG 027 225

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TITLE George Kelly: The Theory of Personal Constructs and His Contributions to Personality Theory.
PUB DATE [95]
NOTE 26p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Behavior Theories; *Counseling Techniques; Foreign Countries; Personality; *Personality Theories; Psychology
IDENTIFIERS Kelly (George); *Personal Construct Theory

ABSTRACT

Wheras many of the grand theories of psychology focus on factors such as the unconscious, power, perfection, or order, George Kelly proposed that humans are driven by the need for personal control and that this personal control comes as a result of being able to construct and predict the events of daily life on a continuous basis. His major two volume work, written in 1955, was "The Psychology of Personal Constructs." Constructs were characterized by Kelly as abstractions possessing both similarities and contrasts in their elements. Constructs were the structures that the client uses to interpret and predict events. Kelly believed that humans are in an on-going process of predicting and controlling events. Individuals endlessly attempt to evaluate, define, and interpret events in order to arrive at their own theory about the world around them. Kelly's fundamental postulate is, "a person's processes are psychologically channelized by the ways in which he anticipates events." Other topics covered in this document are: (1) The Circumspection, Preemption, and Control (CPC) Cycle; (2) Personality Variables; (3) The Role Construct Repertory Test; (4) Treatment of Psychopathology; (5) The Therapeutic Conference and Role Playing; (6) Self-Characterization and Fixed-Role Therapy; and (7) The Scientific Worth of Kelly's Theory. (JBJ)

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George Kelly:

The Theory Of Personal Constructs

And His Contributions to Personality Theory

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GEORGE KELLY:

THE THEORY OF PERSONAL CONSTRUCTS

And His Contributions to Personality Theory

In a classroom experiment, a "criminal" rushes into the classroom and "murders" one of the students. When asked to give a description of the assailant, the details that the students remember illustrate the wide range of perceptions held. How is it that two people witnessing the same event will have such dramatically different versions of what happened? The cognitive approach suggests that each individual has a different way of processing information. Perception affects how the students interpret the events of the murder, and further, it will probably affect how each of them will process and interpret future events.

George Kelly

The Psychology of Personal Constructs which was written in 1955 is the major work of Dr. George Alexander Kelly. This two volume work propelled George Kelly to prominence among psychologists, and job offers abounded as he traveled the world presenting his theory regarding the development of personality. This American, born in 1905 in Kansas, received a Bachelor's degree in mathematics and physics at Friends University and Park College. As a graduate student in the field of educational sociology he earned an M.A. at University of Kansas, and a Ph.D. at University of Iowa. In 1930 as an exchange student, Kelly earned a B.Ed. at University of Edinburgh . Beginning in 1931 he taught psychology at Fort Hays Kansas State College and remained there until 1943. He published a series of six articles written on clinical diagnosis, diagnostic testing, and other questions of concern to clinicians; however, it was his work on personality that gained him recognition. While serving as an aviation psychologist in the Naval Reserves

during World War II, Kelly was able to combine his early passion for engineering with his growing social interest. Following the war in 1946, he began a twenty year term as professor of psychology at the Ohio State University where he developed his personal construct theory. George Kelly's later work has been compiled from transcripts of the many talks which he gave and from the notes for an unfinished book. Dr. Kelly served as Riklis Chair of Behavioral Science at Brandeis University at the time of his death in 1966.

Concepts And Principles

Kelly was preceded by Kurt Lewin and "field theory" in publishing that individual human beings create individualized interpretations of occurrences by predicting what is likely to happen based upon their previous experience, knowledge, or predisposition. It was George Kelly however who developed a theory of cognitive personality coining the term "personal constructs". George Kelly wrote, "I have been so puzzled over the years of labeling of personal construct theory as cognitive that several years ago I set out to write another short book to make it clear that I wanted no part of cognitive theory." In spite of this, some forty years later current psychological work has borne out nearly all of Kelly's ideas as the starting points for many cognitive approaches to personality.

In his first psychology class, Kelly discovered that stimulus-response theory held no valid answers for him. "...the most I could make of it was that the "S" was what you have to have in order to account for the "R" and the "R" was put there so the "S" would have something to account for. I never did find out what the arrow stood for - not to this day -

and I have pretty well given up trying to figure it out" (Kelly, 1963, pp. 46-47). With the rejection of motivation as the sole force behind human behavior, Kelly's conception of human nature began to take shape. While Freud focused on the unconscious, and Skinner used the "S -> R" method above, Kelly viewed man as a scientist who is constantly observing, testing, evaluating then implementing or rejecting before once again beginning the cycle with further observations. "...I began to pursue the notion that one's current acts and undertakings might have as much to do with the development of his personality as did the imprint of events with which he came in contact or the insights he was able to conjure up with the help of his therapist. (1963, p. 56).

In his psychiatric practice in depression era Kansas, Freudian methods seemed "pretty far out" and of little value to his patients. Kelly found that his patients were able to influence the way they thought about something if he provided them with an alternate way to view the same event. If Kelly's explanation accounted for the facts as perceived by the client, and if the explanation contained implications for interpreting future happenings, the clients seemed willing and able to change how he or she perceived an event. The theory of personal constructs took form as Kelly journalized his findings by writing how clients construed meaning. Constructs were characterized as abstractions possessing both similarities and contrasts in their elements. From this terminology came the use of the verb construing and eventually the noun constructs. The constructs being the structures that the client uses to interpret and predict events. Also termed template matching, Kelly studied how constructs evolved (or become entrenched) based upon the experiences that the clients already held as a result of making comparisons to previous experiences. Our

fairly predictable daily behaviors result from constructs or patterns of interpretation which we use relatively often and with familiarity as the result of the way in which we construe the events of our daily lives. Kelly eventually refined the Role Construct Repertory Test (RCRT or REP) as a measurement tool for determining similar and dissimilar constructs and detailed a therapy procedure called fixed-role therapy.

The concept which underpins Kelly's theory of cognition is constructive alternativism which put simply is the assumption that each individual is capable of changing or replacing his or her present interpretation of events by replacing them with an acceptable alternative. Other influences play a role on our experiences therefore humans adapt their perspectives based on both the desire for strong personal control and *as a result* of other influences not under our personal control. "Determinism and freedom are inseparable, for that which determines another is, by the same token, free of the other" (Kelly, 1955, Vol. 1, p. 21). That is to say that a person is able to construct his or her own prediction of the outcome as well as a personal interpretation of a specific event. Using the example of a person who wished to win a gold medal at the Olympic games, you would term the desire to win the medal by spending countless hours practicing as the superordinate construct. This construct is freely chosen. There are however subordinate constructs such as an abbreviated social life and inadequate time for school studies that are not freely chosen but rather determined by the behaviors required to reach the goal. This separates Kelly from "the behaviorists" because he believed that the superordinate goal could be freely chosen which caused the subordinate goals to be determined and controlled by the individual's desire to achieve the superordinate goal.

Kelly's fundamental postulate portrays every person operating as a "scientist." Kelly believed that we are in an on-going process of predicting and controlling events. Individuals endlessly attempt to evaluate, define, and interpret events in order to arrive at their own theory of prediction about the world around them. We try to act like scientists by putting everything to a test, knowing full well that our test criterion is individualistic and shaped by our experiences. When our theory doesn't fit we tend to manipulate the data in order to make for a fit. The event as perceived may not really exist however the perception that the event unrolled as the person believes does exist. Kelly was labeled as a humanist because he embraced the phenomenological position that man is not a passive entity but rather that he interacts with his environment. Other humanistic-existentialists include Laing, Allport, Maslow, and Rogers.

Constructs And Construing

"In building our systems of personal constructs, we place interpretations on events. Through an abstraction process, we construct the meaning of events for ourselves" (Kelly, 1955, Vol. 1, p. 50). With our own personalized meanings then, we construct ways of dealing with our environment. Individual reality determines how we act and interrelate with others. While our relationships may be based on similar experiences our interpretations may be vastly different as in the case of the witnesses to the "murder" in the classroom.

Characteristics of Constructs

A key characteristic of personal constructs is the inclusion of both the similarities and the contrasting elements. When predicting outcomes we choose two experiences that are at the same time similar and contrary to a third situation. Constructs must contain at least three elements and often contain more. Contrasting elements will be bipolar such as in the example that if one calls a certain object a chair there is the implication that it is not a table. The personal nature of constructs causes us to apply differing labels to similar situations. While someone who is willing to help at every opportunity may be considered to be a kind and caring person, this same person may be considered to be a wimp who just cannot say no. Constructs need not be verbalized in order to exist. For example, it may be appropriate for a therapist to help a person with his or her construction processes if the person holds hostile feelings toward someone and is not able to actually tell the other person how he or she feels. Kelly termed those constructs which are most important to us and which we resist changing as core constructs. We also hold several constructs that are fairly easy to change. These are termed peripheral constructs and can be changed without effect on our core constructs. In many societies, the belief in God is a core construct. If I change my peripheral construct that the Beatles did not record after 1971 because they released a "new" recording in 1996, my core construct, God, is not affected by this change.

There are some additional characteristics of constructs. The scope of a construct, the number of other constructs to which it is related is termed the range of convenience. The

relevance of "fat and thin" apply to constructs regarding people but not to those concerning color for example.

Permeability refers to the degree to which new elements will be admitted within the boundaries of a construct. This characteristic is explained by Kelly as the natural process of "growth, "personal development", and "realization of self." The change is accounted for because the superordinate goal is freely chosen and humans are therefore able to change their constructs if they choose by replacing the previously held constructs with new constructs which make sense to them and which they support.

A preemptive type of construct includes only its own elements and maintains that these elements cannot apply to other constructs. Sesame Street gave us a prime example in the segment of the show entitled "One of these things is not like the others...which one doesn't belong?".

Stereotypes are a form of constellatory construct. This type of construct allows its elements to belong to other constructs concurrently, but once identified in a particular way, these elements are fixed. "Blonde women" can simultaneously belong to constructs such as "sexiest women", "prettiest women", "most fragile women", "dumb women". Unfortunately once we label a person into a group we do not let them escape it regardless of which other groups they belong to such as "intelligent", "polite", or "boss."

In the case of a propositional construct all of its elements remain open to modification. Flexibility is the key element of consideration. A round object may be a ball, but a ball may also be an ellipse. While some openness is admirable, realistically in this construct if everything may be something else, the person holding the construct tends to become immobilized. If a back-catcher considers that the baseball hurtling toward home plate at 100 mph is anything but a baseball, he or she may be in for quite a chore in stopping the "projectile".

The Fundamental Postulate And Its Corollaries

The initial statement which needs to be recognized as one begins to examine the work of George Kelly is... "a person's processes are psychologically channelized by the ways in which he anticipates events"(Kelly, 1955, Vol. 1, p.46). This is Kelly's *fundamental postulate*.

People construct an interpretation to verify their views of an event in order to be able to move on and act upon the construct in a relatively stable and predictable manner. Kelly's fundamental postulate refers to humans as scientists. Kelly believed that each of us behaves in a scientific manner in that we seek to predict and verify our own expectations of events. Humans build a construct of the event based upon how they construe the event and then act upon that prediction. The prediction itself is in its own turn then used scientifically to verify that the prediction was true and appropriate behavior confirmed. As humans are constantly changing themselves and their behaviors, if the prediction is false

then the person will use that scientific observation to change their own behaviors or predictions when next presented with a similar situation. Contrary to psychologists who concentrated on internal needs and motivation to effect behavior, Kelly believed that "The human need to know and to control one's own universe" (Monte p. 526) surpassed all other human characteristics. Recognizing that time, experience, and circumstance affect, and perhaps effect perception, Kelly wrote further corollaries to his fundamental proposition. These give some indicators as to how various influences may shape the manner in which a person construes his or her lived experiences. They are:

- Construction - Individuality
- Organization - Dichotomy
- Choice - Range - Experience
- Modulation - Fragmentation
- Commonality - Sociality

The Person as Process

Kelly stated that people develop a hierarchical system to the order in which they construe events. A healthy person will strive for this consistency and stability. The first two corollaries Construction and Individuality may be grouped under this category. Kelly was concerned with the inaccuracy of the English language and the habit of labeling. Two examples from Monte (pp. 529-530):

...on occasion I may say of myself... "I am an introvert." "I", the subject, "am an introvert," the predicate. The language form of the statement clearly places the onus of being an introvert on the subject -- me. What I actually am, the words say, is an introvert.

... the proper interpretation of my statement is that I *construe* myself to be an introvert, or, if I am merely being or coy or devious, I am *inveigling my listener into construing me* in terms of introversion. The point that gets lost in the shuffle of words is the psychological fact that I have identified myself in terms of a personal construct - "introversion." (Kelly, 1958a. p. 70)

...the form of the statement easily deceives the listener into believing that it is *objectively* true that when a predicate is applied to a subject, the subject must undoubtedly *be* what the predicate asserts.

...When I say that professor Lindzey's left shoe is an "introvert", everyone looks at his shoe as if this were something his shoe was responsible for. Or if I say that Professor Cattell's head is "discursive", everyone looks over at him, as if the proposition popped out of head instead of out of mine. Do not look at his head! Do not look at that shoe! I am the one who is responsible for the statement. After you figure out what I mean you can look over there to see if you make any sense of shoes and heads construing them the way I do.(Kelly, 1958a, p. 72)

Construction of a system of constructs is a process. A person anticipates events by construing the possibility of replication. It is a person's past experience and the

construction of that event which shapes the person, not the event as it actually happened. This is a key point of his theory, the focus is on the interpretation not on the event itself. The individuality allows for study of individual differences. Different backgrounds and experiences cause a variation in how people come to anticipate events. While constructs then may be idiosyncratic there remains a great degree of commonality because we know that people do share experiences.

Hierarchy of Experience

The manner in which people adjust their constructs as they experience "personal growth" and the subsequent difficulty this may cause for him or her prompts the individual to develop a system for prioritizing constructs on a basis of importance or willingness to change. The justification for this corollary is that people are not static. It may be necessary for one construct to have to subsume another so that it does not require the individual to reject a significant construct. An individual may create categories of constructs and prioritize the categories so as not to have to abandon any constructs. Constructs are arranged in particular ways within each individual's personal system. A person's construction system is composed of a finite number of dichotomous constructs. Kelly admits that his theory is limited in that personal experiences are limited by the external factors of a person's environment and the potential for lived experiences.

Limitations of Anticipation

Dichotomous choices bombard individuals daily. The process by which individuals choose dichotomous experiences will affect their future evaluations as they are in fact ranking the

benefit of the one chosen over the one foregone. The first limitation of anticipation in this grouping of the corollaries is choice. Choice is the proposition that people select between known alternatives in dichotomized constructs in making their judgments about reality. The range of applicability is limited to only the events about which individuals have previous knowledge or which they deem relevant. The event must be significant for the person or it is ruled irrelevant and does not become part of their base of comparative elements. Shear numbers of experience do not cause a person to modify their constructs, but rather, a person's construction system will vary as he or she construes the replications of events on an on-going basis. Personal relevance and the likelihood of replication are enabling as well as limiting factors.

Variation versus Stability

The process of changing a single construct is the beginning of a chain reaction of change. The ability or willingness to make change in an individual's system is measured by the permeability of the given construct under review. The more easily changed a construct is then the more permeable it is. However, even one change in a person's system will cause reevaluation of the entire construct system. If the construct is firmly held then the system change may be resisted or rejected, whereas if it is convenient to change a construct the resulting construction system change will be quick and rather unnoticeable. The variation in a person's construction system is known as modulation. If a change in a construct is not consistent with other constructs, it may be viewed as being illogical. Individuals may however view the new construct as being consistent with their individual character or personality. Kelly's fragmentation corollary implies that a system of inferred incompatible

subsystems can and do exist within a person. These two corollaries help us to account for apparent inconsistencies in the people around us when they behave in ways which we would not have predicted.

Shared Experience

Just as George Kelly pointed out the individuality of constructs, he also refers to the existence and effect of shared experiences. In this area he has been likened to R. D. Laing because their language in describing phenomenological experiences is virtually identical on the issue of shared experiences. "... to the extent that one person employs a construction of experience which is similar to that employed by another, his or her psychological processes are similar to those of the other person." Kelly (1955, Vol. 1). Once again we see Kelly's focus on the interpretation of the event and not on the event itself. "One of the advantages of this position is that it does not require us to assume that it would take identical events in the lives of two people to make them act alike. Two people can act alike even if they have been exposed to quite different phenomenal stimuli. It is in the similarity in the construction of events that we find similar action, not in the identity of the events themselves.(Kelly, 1955, pp. 90-91). Kelly's final corollary, sociality, refers to the fact that we are social beings. When we interact socially we try to predict someone else's behavior in order to modify our own behavior. The construction processes of one person will affect the social process involving the other person. In my opinion, the idea that if I can predict what he is thinking that I'm thinking then I can behave accordingly must be a nanosecond mental process. If this anticipation process is a frequent and conscious process then I no longer think that we are talking about a healthy individual.

The CPC Cycle

Changes in a person's construct system involve three stages -- circumspection, preemption, and control. When an individual is confronted with elements that do not fit their current construct, he or she is forced to think in a manner which allows some compromise. Kelly's notion of circumspection allows an individual to "make exceptions" to a constellatory construct in order to ensure that the substituted outcome still makes sense to the individual. Circumspection can be termed "what if" thinking. This "what if" allows us to include exceptions within our definitions of expected behaviors. For a healthy individual the choices available under circumspection may not be easy or pleasant, but if a person is to move on, a choice must be made. The option which the individual chooses becomes the one which preempts the other construct elements. It is chosen because of its relevance to the previously held construct. Phase three, control, provides closure to the CPC cycle because it helps build the new construct. When a similar event occurs, a base of reference and a construct will be in place and the person will have control over themselves in the situation. Without control and a completed cycle of evolution or amendment of a construct the person is doomed to "second guess" themselves forever even if a similar situation never again arises.

Personality Variables

Kelly has redefined (reconstructed) some of the traditional personality variables in terms of their applicability to personal construct theory.

The Urconscious

Kelly replaces one term with three. The unconscious is spread over three other concepts which he terms nonverbal construct, submergence, and suspension. Similar to Freud he acknowledges that ideas which we have are not always at the forefront of our conscious being. Kelly's explanation for how we deal with elements which are not congruous with our overall construct systems seems to involve a deliberate activity as opposed to a passive repression beyond our conscious control. Incidences of early child abuse verify that people can live with a certain "unspoken something" of which we are aware yet remain internalized. The notion of submersion suggests that we must remove one of the dichotomous poles of a construct in order that we might subsume the opposite pole into our systems. Another more permeable construct may be the resting place for this accommodation. My opinion is that this accounts adequately for experiences after the "age of reason" but seems to me to be too deliberate an action for very young people to manipulate. The idea that we put an entire portion of our construct system in suspension does have merit however if one is looking for causes as to why a person continues to operate with faulty constructs.

Anxiety

Anxiety in personal construct theory represents a threat to a person's self-concept based on the core constructs which individuals hold regarding themselves and the way in which they interpret events. Anxiety exists as a result of a perceived threat that one's anticipation of events may have been incorrect. This "error" may cast doubt on an individual's entire construct system.

Guilt

The core role construct defines construction of self-concept in relation to significant others. Kelly wrote that if one is pushed away from core role constructs the resulting feeling is one of being inconsistent with his or her own self-image. The guilt feeling then stems from a betrayal of oneself.

Aggressiveness

Kelly's definition of aggressiveness is directed toward people who push themselves into new situations in order to extend the number of alternatives available to them. This is not necessarily negative social aggression, rather an aggressiveness that causes the individual to be wherever he or she can be in order to maximize the opportunities to confront new experiences.

The Role Construct Repertory Test

Commonly known as the RCRT or REP test, this device provides the major diagnostic instrument for assessing clinical studies of personal construct systems. It is the empirical reproducible measurement device that so many other theories do not provide. Therapists use the REP test to try to determine how a person creates their construct system. The REP asks participants to provide the names of persons who represent significant individuals in their lives based on a series of questions. These answers provide the basis for making comparison of similarities and contrasts between the participant and at least two other people. The constructs are then sorted in any of a number of ways but generally

they are examined impressionistically to illuminate a client's problems. More objective examination occurs as need and/or patterns emerge.

Treatment Of Psychopathology

The role of the therapist is to help clients abandon invalid constructs. "Therapy is concerned primarily with opening up the possibility of continual change in the client's construct system. The therapist's job is to diagnose the illness and to throw light on the "paths" by which clients can become well (Kelly, 1955, Vol. 2, p.582).

Controlled elaboration was the term which George Kelly used for therapist assisted process of listening to the client. Kelly believed that acceptance was not necessarily approval of the clients' characteristics; rather, it was more important to understand the patient's systems and provide the guidance. The therapist takes an active role. He or she puts forth suggestions which the client must regard as acceptable and which are consistent with good construct building so that in the event the client is in a similar situation the new elements may be tested. A client's range of convenience is tested by the therapist. Some anxiety is deliberately introduced by the therapist. Just as a scientist experiments, so too the therapist provides the client with a challenge to constructs. This provides the client the opportunity to try on the new construct before having to put it to the test in a real situation. Therapists must have a clear vision of their own construct systems.

The Therapeutic Conference and Role Playing

The interview or conference is one of Kelly's chief methods of therapy. The conference provides the opportunity mentioned above for the therapist to do an assessment of the client's realities and to introduce pointers toward reconstruction. Role playing in the therapist's office affords the opportunity for clients to try on new ideas at low risk to see whether they are internally consistent and would lead to an elimination of an invalid construct. The therapist may also be cast in various roles by the client in order to assess the new elements in the crucial area of core role construct relationships. Unlike transference the idea here is not to relive the past but rather to look forward and see the "what if" of a situation if the client behaved differently.

Self-Characterization Sketches and Fixed-Role Therapy

Albert Ellis, as one of the earliest advocates of cognitive therapy, developed his rational emotive therapy based on cognitive restructuring. Ellis claimed that he did not know Kelly's work but others claim that his work is based on Kelly's cognitive learning theory. Kelly's therapeutic technique has the client write a skit in which he or she is featured but as if written by someone who knows him or her well. The therapist then takes the story and rewrites a fixed role skit in which the client is a character sharply contrasting his or her real self. The client is often willing to try out the new role as it is only a play and not really about him or her. After consultation and discussion the client may emerge with a

new set of constructs and a clearer self concept. There is a version of the REP that is used in the assessment and treatment of schizophrenics. This research which is based on loose constructions focuses upon and tests weak and inconsistent levels of sorting and ranking. Schizophrenia is associated with disordered thinking, one of the foundations of Kelly's highly organized construct systems. At this point I wish to end my overview of the basics of George Kelly's theory and provide some personal opinions and interpretations.

The Scientific Worth of Kelly's Theory

SCOPE By his own admission Kelly's theory is limited. My impression is that the theory and therapy would work well for someone who is not very unhealthy. This is a great approach for relatively healthy individuals who may be temporarily blocked by inconsistencies which they face as they change their social, vocational, or spiritual environment. I am taken by the personal construct philosophy. I do not believe that it serves as a justification for the tremendous greed and selfishness rampant in western culture, but I do however believe that it may be the method by which we have come to be who and what we are today. The shakeup in our construct system which was brought on by the US Civil Rights Movement, the Vietnam war and the betrayal by Richard Nixon shook North Americans as never before. Ideas concerning equality of all men were turned upside down. The Army was killing "peace" protesters, and the biggest shock to core role constructs was the betrayal by our political leaders lead by Tricky Dicky. Once revered as honest hardworking representatives of the people, politicians at every level of government turned out to be self interest driven frauds. Catholic priests were convicted of sexual child

abuse. Medical doctors became as respected as auto mechanics due to their inability to correctly diagnose and treat malady the first time. The rate at which the human body of knowledge is growing has removed the status of expert. What was true yesterday is now old news. If hard information can become obsolete in such a short time how then can we preserve notions and values that are centuries old? This is why I suggest that this is a terrific approach for relatively healthy people because one needs to be able change, modify, accept, forego, evaluate, and move on very rapidly. The person who cannot recognize rapid change and somehow integrate it into his or her personal constructs is destined to become roadkill on the superhighway of life. This analogy goes beyond the usual technological application and right into the realm of mental health. The existence of invalid constructs of work and life long employment must somehow have played a role in the recent rash of killings of workers at former workplaces of terminated workers. The down side may be that those with unhealthy constructs will go on without professional help and deepen their socially erroneous constructs at the price of increased violence and social welfare programs.

TESTABILITY The existence of the REP test stands Kelly's theory above so many other personal theories. While I have come to appreciate Albert Ellis' work, seen that Karen Horney was ahead of her time neither of them offer a measurement device. The paper and pencil methodology Kelly provides for assessing clients initial positions and their changing constructs is practical and reliable.

LIMITATIONS I repeat that the therapy is thin if one were to consider applying it to severe personality disorder cases. Contrary to some authors however, I believe that the measurability and precision of the theory are useful tools for any level of maladjustment. I am concerned by the high intellectual assumption in the work that Kelly makes of all persons. The cognitive approach implies that people actually do *actively* learn from their experiences. I am inclined to believe that as very young humans we are "trained" by rewards and motivation; knowledge of Kelly's work has helped me reconstruct my previously held belief that we are Id driven creatures barely under our own control. My references to our eroded base of social reference may account for much of the selfishness of our culture. Is a return to more stable personal constructs the underpinning of the recently begun swing back to conservatism?

EMPIRICAL LEGITIMACY In spite of a measurable REP test, the interpretation of the data is still a subjective activity undertaken by individual therapists. The test appears to be a valuable beginning point for assessing client concerns but it cannot be the diagnostic tool as well as the remedy. I am not a scientist but I respect this instrument for what it provides. An unresolved question which I have concerns mood or mind set. Do "negative" people answer in a negative way? Do depressed persons unknowingly reduce the value of the methodology by answering in a "depressed way"?

INVESTIGATIVE VALUE Psychologists appear to reject Kelly's theory as being too simplistic. They are concerned that too much attention is paid to cognitive development and have great difficulty discounting motivation and reinforcement as easily

as Kelly did. I share this concern only as it regards the very young however. No references are made but does gender play a role in this methodology? Same sex role models are likely to be interpreted as appropriate but how often do therapists misinterpret opposite sex responses in the REP test?

USEFULNESS As we have seen with most theories it seems that each has something good to be gleaned from it. I believe that this is true of Kelly's work and apparently so do professionals in the area of market research. Tests similar to the REP are being used to test customer preferences and spokesperson credibility. Career counselors are making use of a variation of the test in order to identify clients' thoughts concerning various career choices.

SUMMARY

Whereas many of the grand theories of psychology focus on factors such as the unconscious, power, perfection or order, George Kelly proposed that we are driven by the need for personal control; and that this personal control comes as a result of our being able to construct and predict the events of our daily lives on a continuous basis.

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